

Issue Brief – DCFS Additional Caseworkers

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

NUMBERDHS-08-14

DCFS ADDITIONAL CASEWORKERS

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) is requesting an appropriation of \$1,743,700 with \$1,525,700 from General Funds and \$218,000 from federal funds for 24 additional child abuse/neglect caseworkers for FY 2008. In addition, DCFS is requesting approval from the Legislature to purchase 12 vehicles for the new staff.

OBJECTIVE

DCFS' primary purpose is to provide child welfare services and to protect children from abuse and neglect. This includes child abuse and neglect investigations, child abuse prevention services, family preservation services, child protective services, shelter care, foster care, residential treatment care, adoption services, independent living programs, and domestic violence related services.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

David C. Lawsuit

Under the provisions of the David C. Lawsuit in 2002, the Court, the plaintiffs and DCFS attempted to identify resources needed to bring DCFS closer to realizing the goals of the Milestone Plan. It was decided that the Division needed to substantially increase the number of caseworkers and its training process. The 2003 Legislature appropriated \$1.9 million in additional state funds to DCFS for 51 additional caseworkers and trainers. In the last hearing on November 13, 2006, Judge Campbell directed the plaintiffs and DCFS to continue to work together on a resolution to bring this court case to an end. The Milestone Plan has been complete except for the following:

- QI (Quality Improvement) Committees
- Case Process Performance Level
- Quality Cases Performance Level

Current levels on the Qualitative Case Review are 94 percent on Child and Family Status and 82 percent for system performance. The division continues to have one region that has attained two consecutive years of the performance levels required for exit. Two additional regions have met the level for the first year of the two-year requirement. All regions have attained the level required on the Child and Family Status while three of the five have attained the level required on the system performance.

Overall performance for the Case Process Review are 93 percent for Child Protective Services (CPS), 88 percent for Unable to Locate, 99 percent for Unaccepted Referrals, 86 percent for Home Based Services and 88 percent for Foster Care Services. While each of these represents a passing level, the questions within a program area are scored individually and must each attain a passing level for the state to exit this Milestone Plan.

Legislative Auditor General's Report

In September of 2002, the Office of the Legislative Auditor General (OLAG) issued a report (number 2002-05) which established the caseload per caseworker for maximum effectiveness. The following table shows that 24 additional caseworkers are needed to comply with the audit findings (the standard set by OLAG is highlighted):

DCFS Average Caseload for the First Quarter of FY 2007						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Program	Average Number of Cases	Current Number of Caseworkers	Current Caseload / Caseworker (B/C)	Standard Caseload Recommended by Legislative Audit	Caseworkers Needed Based on Legislative Audit Recommendations (B/E)	Overage/ Shortage (C-F)
Child Protective Services	1,460	115	12.7	15	97.4	17.3
Foster Care	2,585	183	14.1	12	215.4	(32.6)
In-Home Services	882	64	13.7	15	58.8	5.4
Family Preservation	204	37	5.5	4	51.0	(13.7)
Generalist	256	20	13.1	15	17.1	2.4
*New Supervisors					7:1 Ratio	(3.0)
Total Number of FTEs Short	5,387	419			440	(24.1)
*DCFS standard is to have a 7:1 ratio for supervisors to caseworkers						

Internal Savings in DCFS

Because the expenditures for the Out-of-home Services and Adoption Assistance programs in DCFS fluctuate, the Legislature has given DCFS non-lapsing authority the past several years. DCFS is projecting a savings at the close of FY 2007 in the Out-of-Home Services and Adoption Assistance programs of \$4,776,632. DCFS is requesting that \$762,900 in ongoing General Funds be transferred to the Service Delivery program to fund an additional 12 FTE and \$145,200 of non-lapsing funds from Out of Home Care for 12 additional vehicles for the additional caseworkers. The balance of the savings of \$3,868,532 will remain as non-lapsing funds to be used by Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Assistance programs. In addition, the following intent language was proposed in issue brief DHS-08-02.

“It is the intent of the Legislature that funds appropriated for the Adoption Assistance program and the Out of Home Care program in the Division of Child and Family Services be nonlapsing. It is further the intent of the Legislature that these funds be used only for Adoption Assistance and Out of Home Care programs.”

Substance Abuse Treatment for Women with Children in State Custody

The growth in women entering treatment services, particularly of the child bearing age has increased dramatically. DCFS reports that during 2005, 1,200 women were involved with DCFS because of substance abuse. In FY 2005, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) served about 500 of the 1,200 women involved with DCFS. The federal court has ordered women whose children are in state custody into treatment as a condition of getting their children back. Statistics show that about 60 percent of children in state custody have a parent with a drug addiction and 80 percent have a parent with alcohol and/or drug addiction.

DSAMH Proposal

DSAMH would like to expand treatment services for 516 women with children. The prioritization would be women with children that have a substance abuse problem who are working with DCFS to either to keep their children or reunification. The funding request would provide a full continuum of services ranging from out patient to residential services. The proposal is to open two residential facilities bringing the total number of facilities to seven, where mothers could live with two dependent children while receiving treatment services. The annual cost of treatment per person for this program would range from \$1,915 to \$28,300 depending on the level of treatment needed. In contrast, the cost of foster care per child is about \$33,000.

This proposal will still require caseworkers; however there should be a reduction in the cost for out-of-home care for children that would be served with their mothers in these expanded programs rather than going into foster care.

RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the Analyst that the Division of Child and Family Services receive an appropriation of \$871,900 with \$762,000 from General Funds and \$109,900 from federal funds for 12 additional caseworkers. It is also the recommendation of the Analyst that the Legislature authorize the Division of Child and Family Services to hire an additional 12 caseworkers bringing the total to 24 through the transfer of \$762,900 in ongoing General Funds from the Out-of-Home Care (\$132,200) and Adoption Assistance programs (\$630,700). It is further the recommendation of the Analyst that the Legislature authorize the division to purchase 12 additional vehicles from internal reallocations from non-lapsing funds of \$145,200 from Out of Home Care for the use of the additional staff.

Finally, it is the recommendation of the Analyst that the following intent language be adopted for FY 2008: *It is the intent of the Legislature that the funds appropriated for substance abuse treatment for women are non-lapsing. It is further the intent of the Legislature that the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health in conjunction with the Division of Child and Family Services provide a written report to the Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee by the 2008 General Session on the use of the funds, how many individuals were served, the effectiveness of the treatment services, and the fiscal impact on current funding levels for children in state custody.*